DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 322 800 FL 800 227

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TITLE	Report on the Evaluation of Adult Refugee ESL Programs in Minnesota.
INSTITUTION	Minnesota State Dept. of Education, St. Paul. Office of Community and Adult Basic Education.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Refugee Resettlement (DHHS), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	23 May 86
NOTE	54p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Adult Education; Adult Learning; Educational Strategies; *English (Second Language); Instructional Effectiveness; Limited English Speaking; Policy Formation; *Program Evaluation; Public Policy; *Refugees; *Second Language Instruction; Student Evaluation; Student Placement; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS	*Minnesota

ABSTRACT

The Minnesota Department of Education's Office of Community and Adult Basic Education commissioned an evaluation the 18 adult refugee English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) programs funded in 1985-86 through the Minnesota Refugee Program Office of the Department of Human Services. The purpose of the evaluation was to identify effective practices and make recommendations for future decision making and planning. Two sources of information were used to explore this question: (1) the data system used by the Refugee Program Office; and (2) the information from the people delivering and receiving services. The report discusses the project design, methodology, and activities, and examines the clustering of students based on student performance levels (SPL). The next section summarizes the context and method variables that are perceived to be most effective in teaching English to adult refugees. The final section of the report looks at the critical issues for public policy decisions. This section also includes recommendations in the areas of student performance measurements and the data system being developed. (GLR)

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A REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF ADULT REFUGEE ESL PROGRAMS IN MINNESOTA

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Minnesota Department of Education
Capitol Square 550 Cedar Street Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101 Phone

Dear Reader:

In November 1985, the Minnesota Department of Education, as part of the interagency agreement with the Department of Human Services' Refugee Program Office, commissioned an evaluation of Minnesota's adult refugee English as a Second Language (ESL) programs with funding from the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement. Outside consultants, Margaret Bringewatt and David Nelson completed the project report in May 1986. At the time, there were eighteen programs operating in the state - twelve were ABE programs administered through local school districts; three were mutual assistance associations; one was a non-profit agency; one was a program for deaf refugees; and one was an organization responsible for the state-wide coordination and training of volunteer ESL tutors.

The original purposes of the evaluation were:

- To define and measure the effectiveness of the above mentioned adult refugee programs;
- To identify successful classroom practices, and
- To make recommendations that would guide state agency planning and decision making.

As you consider the report, several points should be noted:

1. During the design phase, the report's primary audience was to be staff of the Department of Education and the Refugee Program Office. However, as the evaluation process evolved, a second but equally important audience identified was Minnesota's ESL program providers themselves.
2. Because the data system was in the process of being set up during the evaluation, it was impossible at that time to analyze student progress and language level correlations. Consequently, the plan to measure effectiveness had to be postponed.
3. The issues section is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather it is offered as a summary of critical concerns to those who are familiar with the context.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

4. The study was undertaken to explore the field's environment, opinions, and ideas. The state did not initiate the study to learn what planners and policy makers wanted to hear but to promote an honest discussion of providers' perceptions. Therefore, the views in the document do not necessarily reflect the views of the state departments involved.
5. The process of conducting the evaluation was in many ways as important as the final report itself. By inviting full participation from people working and studying in programs, the evaluators were able to make adjustments in the design in keeping with the realities at hand. These adjustments were key to the success of the project.
6. This report is not an end in itself. It is meant to serve as a point of departure for further study, discussion, and program development.

Comments concerning the report should be addressed to:

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We wish to thank all who participated in this project. Their efforts and insights are greatly appreciated.

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A REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF ADULT REFUGEE ESL PROGRAMS IN MINNESOTA

prepared by the consulting team of

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The Minnesota Department of Education
Office of Community and Adult Basic Education

May 23, 1986

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I. OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

A. INTRODUCTION

For readers of this report, English as a Second Language (ESL) is a subject known well, but usually only because of experience as teachers or program planners. Few of us have learned English as our second language, or had to learn any language under the circumstances currently confronting refugees in Minnesota. This makes the efforts of judging the effectiveness of ESL efforts even more elusive.

Yet effectiveness is important to people at all levels. This report was commissioned by the Minnesota Department of Education Office of Community and Adult Basic Education to evaluate the 18 adult refugee ESL programs funded in 1985-86 through the Minnesota Refugee Program Office of the Department of Human Services.

The purpose of the evaluation was to identify effective practices and make recommendations for future decision making and planning. There were two sources of information which we could use to explore this question. One was the data system used by the Refugee Program Office. The second was all of the people delivering and receiving services. We originally designed the project to rely on both. However, in the course of our work we discovered the following:

1. No outcome data which might measure student progress would be available within the time frame of this inquiry. Even if such data were available, it would not explain why some students were progressing more rapidly than others.

2. The current data system provides no information on employment outcomes for students .

3. Teachers were often unable to articulate during interviews why certain strategies or methods were used, or what principles formed the basis of those choices.

4. Students, while surprisingly open, were able to discuss many likes and dislikes, but were not able to address the question of what methods were most effective.

5. There is significant tension between the federally mandated employment focus and the educators' belief in the importance of literacy skills. This debate is at the heart of virtually all design and method decisions.

6. Current system design problems appear to be more significant than method selection in determining the effectiveness of ESL instruction.

Because of these factors, we altered our project to rely heavily on perceptions of those in the field: administrators, coordinators, teachers and students. We focused our inquiry on identifying methods and contexts, or program design variables, which those interviewed believed to be most effective.

We were unable to match their perceptions with "hard data" on student progress, since such data was unavailable. Yet their comments are rich with lessons for practitioners, gleaned both from what they said and what they were unable to say. The first section of this report is our effort at reflecting their collective thoughts, pointing out differences of opinion, and drawing conclusions about effectiveness.

In the six month course of our inquiry, we found ourselves repeatedly confronted with system-wide issues as similar themes emerged during interviews and were corroborated by observations in the field. For example, planners and decision makers expressed deep concerns over the current environment within which the Refugee Program Office operates: significant federal reductions in funding are anticipated, reduced time eligibility for certain services is mandated and the federal emphasis continues to be on employment, which is at apparent odds with much of what teachers view as important in teaching English.

These environmental factors make the future of ESL quite uncertain, regardless of what classroom methods are employed. Although the purpose of this project is to define those methods which are most effective, we have also tried to address the system issues which are so important to the future direction of these projects. These system issues are discussed in the section entitled Critical Issues for Public Policy Decisions.

B. METHODOLOGY

1. PROJECT DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

Learning English is the key for refugees in building a new life in this country. This assumption is not new, but there are several circumstances that make the problems of current refugees different from those of past immigrant groups.

The first is the unprecedented rate of arrival of Southeast Asian refugees. From 1979 to 1985 close to 30,000 refugees settled in Minnesota, 85 percent of whom are Vietnamese, Hmong, Lao or Cambodian. (Other refugees arrive primarily from Ethopia, Roumania and Poland.) Second is the relative lack of marketable skills of the Vietnamese, Hmong, Laotian and Cambodian, especially those who arrived later in the U. S.. Third is the great difference between the cultural background of refugees and the cultural expectations in the U. S.

Each of these problems has had a direct influence on the programs that try to teach English to refugees. For example, the high arrival rate produced an immediate high demand for language classes, but did not allow for an orderly planning and design of those efforts. The lack of marketable skills and the relatively low educational level of later arrivals made educators realize that traditional approaches to education may not work, and that many refugees needed more time than originally expected to learn the new language. The cultural differences influenced ESL classes by making teachers realize that some in-class methods are not accepted or effective with some Vietnamese, Hmong, Laotian and Cambodian, and that methods should be adjusted according to the specific refugee group.

In the past few years ESL classes have done well in recognizing these changes and have begun to incorporate them into their teaching efforts. It is important to note, however, that these efforts are still in their developmental stages. Although educators have begun to more clearly define the goals of ESL services and the problems involved in delivering those services, there is still substantial debate and experimentation about the specific methods to use.

Recognizing that service delivery is still in the developmental stages is an important foundation for evaluation and project design efforts in ESL projects. This project is designed to provide the information which can assist in efforts to identify effective methods and can be used in defining future service directions.

This formative direction is especially important when one considers the variety of ESL service delivery organizations involved. In a few cases they are well-established agencies that have many years of experience in community education. They are part of the education network and have good access to the innovative ideas that may help them improve their ESL services. There are many other agencies, however, that are operating ESL classes because of their dedication to the resettlement of refugees and see language training as an important component.

There is even more diversity among the delivery organizations when one considers which 18 agencies are under contract with the State. One agency is a private organization, three are Mutual Assistance Associations (MAA's), one trains volunteers for personalized tutoring, some are affiliated with local churches and others operate within the Adult Basic and Continuing Education settings (ABCE). (Appendix A includes a listing of these agencies with summary information of who they serve.)

Having such a variety of service vendors is both a challenge and an asset. Although communication lines are not well established, there is an opportunity for agencies to learn from each other, with traditional educational agencies learning from the refugee agencies how to refine their methods, and the refugee agencies learning from the traditional agencies how to operate in this complicated human service sector. One role of this project is to enhance the transfer of such learning and to stimulate healthy project development.

This situation creates an especially difficult task for the evaluators, because providing technical assistance is not the primary purpose of such an evaluation project. It is possible, however, to define the tasks of the evaluator in such a way as to provide the information necessary for public policy and planning decisions at the State and still provide directions and recommendations that can be used by local service agencies in their efforts to improve their service delivery. This is what we have attempted tp do in this project.

2. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

This project was dependent on the participation of many teachers, project staff and students. They were the source of the information from which theses observations arose. Below are listed the activities of this project.They are included here to describe our efforts in involving these people in this formative process.

Major components of this design were:

1. Six design meetings with the Adult Refugee Coordinator at the Department of Education in order to refine the project design, review the history and current status of ESL in Minnesota and discuss major issues and debates in ESL teaching strategies and methods.

2. Review of project files including the 1985-86 Request for Proposals, individual contracts, supplementary information on each of the sites, and pertinent literature.

3. A preliminary meeting with project coordinators at which the project was introduced and input solicited for refinement of design.

4. Three structured meetings with representatives of the State Refugee Program Office and the Department of Education.

5. Site visits to 16 of the 18 locations where ESL services are provided. These visits included interviews with each program coordinator and with groups of teachers. About 50 teachers were involved.

6. Five student focus groups, in which refugees discussed their opinions on the structure of ESL classes, methods used, and their needs. About 50 students were involved.

7. One focus group meeting with 8 teachers in which educational philosophies, methods and innovative ideas were discussed.

8. A review of demographic and program data available through the Refugee Program Office.

It is apparent from this list of activities that a great number of individuals directly involved with ESL participated in this project. This report is an attempt to reflect their perceptions on what strategies and methods are most effective in teaching English to adult refugees.

3. CLUSTERING BY STUDENT ABILITY

If one wishes to understand how different methods influence the rate at which students learn English, then one must take into account the other aspects which may influence this rate of learning. We considered the three most important aspects to be:

1. Student ability, which is affected by inherent intelligence, past general educational experience, past English education experience, cultural adjustment factors, and individual factors which may include age, sex, family norms and motivation.

2. Program design factors, which include the times classes are offered, support services such as transportation and day care, links to other agencies, the role of coordinators, and size of classes. We have labeled these "Context Variables".

3. Teaching strategies and methods, which include classroom organization, planning, materials and personal style.

Given the importance of these aspects, a three-dimensional matrix would be most helpful in understanding which methods would have their most impact on which students, and in which settings. We have represented this way of thinking by organizing our findings into groupings of students, or "clusters". With this method we can control for student ability level and it becomes possible to discuss program design factors and teaching methods in roughly comparable circumstances.

Our clustering system is based on the Student Performance Levels (SPL's) used for placement. We believe this is the best available proxy for the individual differences in learning abilities. Although it is a secondary measure, one can assume that students in similar SPL's have roughly similar individual factors that relate to their ability to learn English.

The seven SPL's have been collapsed into three separate clusters. Cluster A includes SPL's 0, 1, and 2. Cluster B includes SPL's 3 and 4, and Cluster C includes SPL's 5 and 6. Both context and method observations are discussed within this clustering system. Care should be taken to remember that individual student differences may still have strong impact on the performance of a student in any given teaching situation.

The following section identifies the context and method factors that appear to be most important in teaching adult refugees. They represent the opinions of a majority of those interviewed in combination with our classroom observations. The factors are organized in four sections, starting with those context and method issues that appear to relate to all Student Performance Levels, followed by sections dedicated to each of three SPL clusters.

II. CONTEXT AND METHOD VARIABLES ORGANIZED BY THE LEVEL OF STUDENT ABILITY

This section summarizes the context and method variables that are perceived to be most effective in teaching English to Adult refugees. These perceptions were collected through visits to 16 of the 18 programs in Minnesota, interviews with over 50 teachers, interviews with 16 coordinators/lead teachers, classroom observation at all site visits and focus groups involving over 50 adult refugee students.

The context, strategies and methods variables listed here are those issues receiving the most emphasis by the people participating in these interviews and reflect the consensus opinions expressed to us. They are organized in priority order in each section with those issues that appeared strongest across all interview sessions being listed first.

Please note that examples are included on many of these variables. These examples are to display specific activities that we observed or ideas brought up on our site visit interviews. They are not intended as a thorough list of recommended activities but as a means of clarifying the variables and providing some stimulating ideas.

A. CONTEXT AND METHOD VARIABLES FOR ALL STUDENT PERFORMANCE LEVELS

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CONTEXT VARIABLES

1. Hire and Support Excellent Teachers

Excellent teaching is the one variable around which everything else revolves. Excellence is comprised of several factors. In addition to teaching experience and training, excellence also means: commitment and professionalism, (taking the job very seriously); interest in learning, (from students, other teachers and supervisors); flexibility to adapt to changing needs of the class or individuals; and concern and caring for students, including respect and personal interest.

Examples:

Create new materials or actively search for better ones.

Take advantage of training opportunities.

Use staff meetings to raise concerns and discuss methods.

Prepare thorough lesson plans, but be able to shift from them as needed.

Become aware of students' personal successes and problems, including those related to employment.

No one set of experiences and training creates ideally prepared teachers. Yet the huge variety of observed backgrounds and system supports has yielded vast differences in classroom effectiveness. In addition, minimal funding levels have discouraged expenditures on preparation time or staff meetings, programs give teachers little opportunity to observe each other or share ideas, and the lack of long-term contracts creates an atmosphere of instability.

Hiring excellent teachers should be the first priority of the ESL program. In addition, increased emphasis should be placed on teacher training, workshops and opportunities to exchange ideas on methods. It would be useful to establish a Minnesota clearinghouse and forum for materials sharing, since so many teachers spend so much time searching for or creating their own materials.

2. **Recruit Program Coordinators With Leadership Skills, and Strengthen the Coordinator's Role**

The best program coordinators we observed were knowledgeable in the field and committed to staff development. By contrast, at some sites teachers operated quite independently with no evident support or feedback from coordinators.

Examples:

Provide in-service training on ESL or assure teachers have access to it.

Maintain contact with other ESL providers and awareness of what services are offered where.

Provide periodic classroom observations; encourage teachers to observe each other.

Interpret state policies for teachers, helping incorporate them into methods delivery.

Provide individual consultation with teachers on teaching style, methods and materials.

Use a defined evaluation procedure which provide feedback to teachers.

Search for and introduce new materials.

Because one of the major impediments to effective leadership is time commitments elsewhere, either as a teacher or administrator of other programs, it would be well to hire coordinators to do only that job, and to work with more than one site if necessary. Strengthening the coordinator's role as illustrated through the above examples would not only provide supports necessary to improve the quality of teaching, but would contribute to the consistency of service delivery across programs.

3. **Promote Coordination With Other Agencies**

Coordination needs to occur in three directions: with other services on the educational continuum, with employment services and with resettlement services. The coordinating role should be centered in the program coordinator. While this may seem self-evident, it is not what is happening in the field. Teachers too often serve as counselors for their students. It should be noted that maintaining an active interest in students' lives, and using immediate problems as a springboard for classroom lessons are important teaching approaches. That is not the same as case management. The best programs have links to other agencies which effectively help refugees, leaving teachers free to teach.

Examples:

Maintain a working knowledge of other resettlement services in the community, and provide students with information and referral.

Establish close working relationship with employment services; provide in-service training to teachers to maintain a realistic view of job markets.

Maintain knowledge of requirements of other educational programs, in order to help students plan for these opportunities.

Make appropriate cross referrals to other ESL sites.

4. **Structure Programs That Can Adjust to Students' Individual Educational Needs**

This is a variable closely related to teacher style, but is also a program design issue. It links ESL teaching to the philosophy of individualizing teaching to meet students' needs, and is seen as important because of its ability to speed the pace of learning within the framework of federally defined time eligibility.

Examples:

Provide open enrollment when appropriate for students who are unable to consistently attend.

Allow teachers to move students to a different level in the middle of the quarter.

Use classroom aides and volunteers to increase individual and specialized instruction time.

Use in-home tutors to reinforce classroom learning.

5. **Maximize Instructional Time and Pace**

This variable, like the one above, is critical because of the time eligibility factor. According to students and teachers, holding classes daily helps retention, and the preference was for 3-4 hours per day. The most effectively run classes had from 8-10 students, or no more than 20 students plus an available classroom aide. Students expressed frustration over the slow pace pursued in large classes, and in the loss of equal participation by all students.

Examples:

Start classes on time and minimize breaks.

Design lesson plans which enable the student to move smoothly from activity to activity.

Minimize student talking and other noise distractions.

Use class time infrequently for outside speakers whose presence does not contribute to language learning.

Use volunteers to work with students individually.

Promote English speaking on breaks.

STRATEGIES AND METHODS FOR ALL SPL LEVELS

1. Teach Students to Learn

This is a strategy much discussed and difficult to implement, but essential to the long-term success of refugees, both in education and in their other pursuits. In the classroom it is evidenced by encouraging questions and risk-taking. The liveliness of students who work with such teachers contrasts sharply with the passivity, often mistaken for respect, of students who rely on teachers for direction.

Examples:

Develop study skills, such as memorization, active listening, note taking and review of written materials.

Teach students to use everyday references, such as the yellow pages, want ads, bus schedules and maps.

Practice dictionary skills.

Encourage questioning in the class.

Ask students to solve problems, using English, rather than answering all questions immediately.

2. Use Relevant Issues as Tools for Teaching

The best teachers were attentive to this principle of relevance - adapting lessons to real situations present in student's everyday lives. This frequently involved adapting ready-made materials and/or creating materials geared to students' interests and concerns.

Examples:

Have students write or talk about their homeland, their journey to the U. S., or their first experience in Minnesota.

Discuss potential employment opportunities, using actual, current want ads; offer a field trip to sites where refugees have been or are being hired.

3. Use Flexible Responses to Immediate Issues

While normally stated in the same phrase, relevance and immediacy are different elements of excellent teaching. The latter refers to the ability to flexibly respond to immediate circumstances or issues in students' lives. There are two dimensions to this. One is taking a problem-solving role, so that students are able to attend to lessons without distraction. However, this comes close to the case management role described above and is a potential trap for teachers. The more important dimension is to turn immediate events or issues into English lessons. It is important to remember that there is typically conflict between providing sequence and order, and flexibly responding to immediate issues.

Examples:

Use weekend activities as the basis for classroom conversation, and preparation of a class newsletter to student vocabulary.

Use a student's need to take public transportation to the hospital that afternoon as the springboard for a lesson on forms of transportation, map and schedule reading.

4. Promote, Encourage and Enhance Learning Outside the Classroom

This strategy is an important way to increase the amount of practice students can get, speed their learning and aid in transfer of knowledge to new situations. Students who were interviewed were highly interested in opportunities to practice English, but virtually all reported that they rarely speak English outside of class. The few who were employed reported difficulty in using English on the job.

Examples:

Assign homework daily. Provide consumable materials.

Use cassette tapes for students to practice listening and speaking.

Structure dictionary lessons that can be done independently.

Promote students' listening to news, writing down new vocabulary words and discussing them.

5. Involve Students in Educational Goals

The methods for implementing this strategy vary considerably from the lowest to highest level of English ability. But the principle is consistent; students who were helped to understand and articulate educational goals seemed more actively motivated to learn. Some teachers explained that it is hard to convince some students of what they need to learn, and slow them down to learn things thoroughly.

Examples:

At the lowest levels, maintain an order and simplicity that in itself gives students a sense of progress and accomplishment.

Discuss with students the lesson plan for the week, and review progress at week's end.

Set goals for the classroom.

Set individual learning objectives.

Maintain a record sheet for homework as well as classroom activity, and use it to show progress to students.

Help students think about and articulate the link between English and its application in their lives.

Recognize achievements of students publicly.

6. Balance the Use of Appropriate Materials

Students and teachers both voiced the opinion that the use of a variety of methods, with corresponding materials, was the route to faster learning. While this may seem basic, many teachers seemed to have difficulty with this balance, making a particular set of materials the focus rather than the aid to learning. A dearth of appropriate materials was a frequently cited problem, but this may indicate system isolation and funding problems rather than a real lack of materials. Materials should be appropriate to adults and should balance the relevant experience of the refugees with cultural orientation to the U.S.

Examples:

Use a brief conversation in a variety of ways: copy, memorize, recite orally with a partner, dictate and write, pull key vocabulary words, work on grammar.

Use spelling and vocabulary lessons to reinforce writing and reading materials.

Organize field trips to employment sites so students can see physical layout, sense the work atmosphere and perhaps meet potential employers.

Build practice conversations based on the actual site visit.

B. CONTEXT AND METHOD VARIABLES FOR STUDENT PERFORMANCE LEVELS 0-1-2

CLUSTER A

****

CONTEXT VARIABLES

1. **Attract new refugees who have never attended ESL classes in the agency's community.**

   There is some concern that there is a lack of adequate advertising and recruitment for ESL students. Many agencies seem to depend on the word of mouth system from past and present students and informal contact with resettlement agencies. These methods may not be reaching all potential students and may become less effective as local attention to resettlement decreases.

   Examples:

   Require less rigid regulations for enrollment.
   (e.g. open enrollment)

   Use a culturally comfortable setting (building and classroom).

   Arrange transportation to and from class.

   Advertise to reach potential students.

   Actively coordinate with sponsoring and resettlement agencies.

2. **Maintain students' attendance once they have begun attending ESL classes.**

   Examples:

   Arrange support services.
   - transportation
   - child care
   - ability to refer/address immediate crisis resettlement problems

   Have translation services available.
   - bilingual staff
   - quick access to other bilingual resource (MAA, student, caseworker)

3. **Organize classes of lower performance level students with as similar English ability levels as possible.**

Mixing new lower level students with other students who have higher English proficiency and who have been in classes for a while does not seem to be a good idea. It isolates the new students and increases their levels of self doubt. It also reduces the chance to address the unique immediate needs of these new students, such as their resettlement problems and lack of study habits.

Organizing by student performance level should also make it easier to select materials and develop methods and allow for more appropriate group work, especially for the lower levels (See method issues discussed below.)

4. **Treat students as adults**

This context issue is one of substantial debate and there is much variance across classrooms about how students are treated, especially in the lower level classes. We have identified this as a key context variable because of its importance in establishing an atmosphere of learning in which future context and method goals can be addressed. Of special note are the interrelationships of this variable with "Teaching to Learn", "Attention to Individual Needs" and "Ability to Maintain Attendance".

Examples:

Use materials appropriate to the activities of an adult

Use a class process that recognizes and uses adult students' abilities to reason, to think abstractly and to problem solve.

Keep adult students informed about the reason for selection of teaching methods and materials.

Involve students in defining personal goals for their participation in class and use this information to decide on classroom design within the existing curricula.

5. Address student expectations in classroom design and process.

Some students have a preconceived notion about how schools should operate with an emphasis on a formal classroom process and written materials. Even though such a process is not necessarily the most effective, it is important to address these expectations, especially in the lower level classes. If these newer students are surprised or disappointed too much, they will just stop coming.

This creates a dilemma for some programs that wish to design classes around informal methods, but such styles should be introduced as students become accustomed to the class and can begin discussing the reasons behind the new methods.

As classes progress, student expectations should continue to influence classroom design, but should be incorporated in the active process during class of discussing individual goals, classroom activities, and student progress.

Examples:

Use consumable materials

Use books and organize materials that enhance students sense of ownership and promote a sense of progress.

Use written materials for homework

Use teacher-directed methods in the very early days

Promote the discussion of personal educational goals and expectations.

STRATEGIES AND METHODS FOR SPL 0-1-2

1. **Actively involve students in the classroom activities.**

   Note the relationship of this issue to the issues of "Treat as Adults", "Teaching to be Students" and "Teaching to Learn".

   Examples:

   Incorporate physical activities and experiential techniques such as Total Physical Response.

   Promote active listening.

2. **Help students solve their immediate crisis resettlement problems that hinder their ability to learn in class.**

   Examples:

   Encourage students to identify problems they need help with in order to attend and learn.

   Maintain an atmosphere in which students are willing to ask for help.

   Address such problems through teacher or other staff capacity, or through active referral process to local caseworker.

3. **Focus on students gaining a familiarity with the English sound system and a basic proficiency in English sentence structure.**

   Examples:

   Focus on oral skills, listening and repeating.

   Use group activities that require active listening and repetition, incorporate immediate feedback and promote the willingness to try speaking skills in class.

4. Teach study habits

It is generally believed that many of the lower level students who have had little or no educational experience are also unprepared and inexperienced in learning through study. Those students without these study skills will not learn as fast as others and will fall behind. This places the responsibility of teaching these skills and establishing study habits on the teachers of these introductory levels.

Examples:

Practice and teach memorization.

Practice and teach active listening

Use written materials to study on their own.

Emphasize the importance of reviewing past information to enhance remembering.

Promote the practice of speaking English outside the class.

C. CONTEXT AND METHOD VARIABLES FOR STUDENT PERFORMANCE LEVELS 3-4

CLUSTER B

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CONTEXT VARIABLES

The context and method variables which apply to Student Performance Levels 3 and 4 tend to be variables which are important in their basic form in the lower performance levels and evolve into the methods and context variable for the highest levels. Because of this, many of the variables included in this section use relative terms such as "increase", "decrease" or "emphasize". Our intent is to identify these key variables and to provide some direction on the rate of transition as these methods and contexts evolve through the SPL clusters.

1. **Design classes so that students can begin receiving more individual attention as their individual differences begin to surface.**

   Examples:

   Enhance and promote students voicing their opinions and interests.

   Use student interests and educational goals as one basis for deciding on class content.

   Provide the resources (materials and personnel) to allow for more small group activities.

2. **Promote the active involvement of students in the design of their classes.**

   As students become familiar with our educational setting and progress to a level where they can communicate within the class, greater and greater emphasis should be placed on student responsibility for their educational goals and student involvement in the design and control of their own education in the classroom. SPL 3 and 4 are not too soon to start.

   Although it sounds like a grand platitude, those programs that do expect such involvement seem to succeed in assisting their students in becoming clear about their goals, and assertive and motivated about their education.

Examples:

Promote teachers' role in explaining why certain lesson plans and classroom activities have been selected.

Promote student direction for the selection of future classroom activities.

Design and use student evaluation of project design, teacher performance, materials and classroom activities.

3. Increase the involvement of outside resources on site, especially employment agencies, prospective employers and volunteers that can help create realistic classroom experiences.

As a general rule, the students at level 3 and 4 have had sufficient time to adjust to the immediate problems of resettlement and are able to converse at a basic level with strangers. They are, however, often unwilling to seek such interaction on their own so ESL programs should arrange oppoptunities for students to converse with other people often.

The goal should be to incorporate the use of outside people within the context of the class design and should be controlled by the teacher, but the frequency of using these outside resources should increase as quickly as possible.

Examples:

Arrange for volunteers to assist in the classroom as aids for an extended period of time.

Arrange for community representatives who have knowledge in an area of special interest to visit for one or two class periods to discuss their area. (e.g. police, lawyers, job service, big employers, nutritionists)

Plan after class or break time "teas" where volunteer citizens can meet and converse in English with the students.

4. Identify local community activities where students could practice their English speaking skills and actively promote student participation in those activities.

Examples:

Coordinate with local community centers, churches and other agencies that organize informal social gatherings and promote events in which students can participate.

Promote the use of ESL class or building space by other agencies so that students can participate in familiar space.

STRATEGIES AND METHODS FOR SPL 3-4

1. Increase activities that integrate reading and writing into the teaching plan in an effort to construct the foundation of literacy training.

There is substantial agreement by many that basic literacy is a necessity for refugees, especially if they are interested in finding work that has the potential for future improvement. Students are almost unanimous in their request for more reading and writing skills even after their speaking skills are very refined.

The issue for ESL classes seems to be when to attend to these basics and how much attention should be given to them within the present employment context. In general, most agree that starting these basics early is the best, and there should be a consistent effort across all classes to build the basic foundation of literacy.

Examples:

Begin using written materials as the source of topics for conversations in class.

Increase the expectations that students will read materials in preparation for class.

Have students maintain a written notebook of notes and lessons written in class and at home.

Begin introducing lessons that require students to communicate in writing.

2. Introduce more spontaneous conversation into the class process.

As students develop the ability to converse, the use of spontaneous conversation in the classroom becomes easier. Such spontaneity not only increases student involvement but also assures that the topics discussed are more relevant and immediate for the students.

Examples:

Begin offering opportunities for students to bring up topics of interest in the class and adjust the lesson plan to incorporate them.

Place greater expectations on students to introduce ideas or topics that they would like to discuss.

Use current event topics as the basis of lessons.

Assign homework that includes relevant topics that can be discussed in the next class periods.

3. Continue to reduce the amount of teacher-directed activities and increase the amount of student-directed activities.

This variable is interrelated to many other variables identified as being important, including "Treating Students as Adults", "Increasing Student Participation", and the general goal of assisting students in becoming more involved and assertive.

Examples:

Reduce the authority position of the teacher.

Begin introducing sections of the class in which activities are selected by the students.

Use more small group activities.

4. Begin increasing emphasis on teaching students to solve problems on their own.

Examples:

Answer fewer questions posed to the teacher and redirect them to the students for a solution.

Reduce the position of authority of the teacher (by changing teacher/student positions, means of addressing each other. etc.)

Request direction or advice from the students on process or topic issues.

5. Structure classroom activities to provide more and more individual attention as the need arises.

Examples:

Use smaller groups that are organized by interest areas or activities.

Use aids or volunteers to give individual attention to students who have specific interests or specific educational needs and desires.

Begin introducing student-to-student teaching in small groups.

D. CONTEXT AND METHOD VARIABLES FOR STUDENT PERFORMANCE LEVELS 5-6

CLUSTER C

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CONTEXT VARIABLES

1. **Design classes to enhance the ability to work individually with students as much as possible.**

   Examples:

   Group and regroup students periodically by performance level and interest.

   Keep the classes small to moderate size (6 to 12)

   Coordinate the use of tutors and aids.

   Provide community companies/agencies/individuals for use in class exercises so long as they have a clear and explicit role in teaching the language skills for the day.

2. **Actively coordinate with other local education providers.**

   Students leaving ESL and wanting more education should be assisted in this transfer. Also, students who wish to study in another setting concurrent with their ESL enrollment should be actively assisted.

   Examples:

   Keep informed and maintain active contact with other educational program options.

   Actively inform students of these options.

3. **Coordinate, promote and refer individual students who want or need education outside of the ESL class.**

   Examples:

   Provide materials for self-study for those students with the time and inclination.

Arrange for individual tutoring before/after class for people who need remedial help and/or for people wishing to study more.

Coordinate with other sources of classes or tutors and actively refer students who want/need the assistance.

4. **Develop and maintain the ability to address students' more immediate employment needs.**

Some will be in jobs while they are in ESL classes, and more will be actively seeking employment.

Examples:

Schedule classes to allow for working students to attend.

Use employment materials that apply to specific local employment options.

Maintain active coordination with local employment services and possibly with some major employers.

Keep teachers and students informed of local employment service options.

STRATEGIES AND METHODS

1. **Emphasize accuracy of pronunciation, structure, vocabulary and writing.**

   Students should already know the basics of English sentence structure and should be able to converse enough to be understood. If this is true, then the upper levels of ESL should include methods and activities that allow students to improve their pronunciation and their ability to use the English language accurately in speaking and writing.

   This emphasis should be balanced with the continuing need to review the basic skills, to expand vocabulary and to assist individuals with their specific needs.

   Examples:

   Correct students as they make errors in speaking during lessons.

   Provide correction and immediate personal feedback on lessons and homework.

   Emphasize 1:1 teacher/student or student/student interaction.

2. **Integrate reading, speaking and writing.**

   As students progress in their speaking and basic English proficiency, teaching methods should be able to integrate reading, writing and speaking so that students learn to use all of these as interchangable methods of communication.

   Examples:

   Use written materials as the source of topics for class discussions.

   Expect students to read material in preparation for class activities.

   Teach note-taking skills and promote writing down information and instructions during class in order to assist their individual studies.

3. **Accommodate individual differences in the pace of learning in the classroom.**

   Examples:

   Use small groups or individual study.

   Promote student-student interaction.

   Use the teacher as facilitator with small groups.

   Use aids, volunteers, outside participants.

4. **Promote and use discussions within the classroom that require students to converse "spontaneously" without using prepared or memorized materials.**

   This issue is interrelated to the issues of "Treating Students as Adults", "Relevance" and "Immediacy".

   Examples:

   Promote student-generated comments/questions during class.

   Instantly revise the 'planned' lesson to take advantage of an opportunity for spontaneous discussion.

5. **Take advantage of students' abilities to be independent, self-directed and to learn on their own.**

   Examples:

   Promote student-directed activities in the classroom.

   Offer ideas and materials for independent study in the class and outside the class.

E. SUMMARY OF STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

As part of this project five focus groups with present ESL students were organized. Two groups met with us at Pratt school in Minneapolis, one in Eagan and two in Rochester. There were two sessions each for students in class levels 3-4 and 5-6 and one with students in level 1-2. Our goal was to seek the opinions of students about the most effective methods for learning English and to compare their perceptions to those of the teachers and other program staff.

The sessions were generally informal, involved 8 to 15 students in each group and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The students were informed of the sessions during their class times and were asked if they wished to participate. The working outline used for these focus groups is included in Appendix B section 3.

The issues brought up by the students were incorporated to a large degree into the method and context summaries in this report, but there were certain student perceptions and some observations about the focus groups that should be highlighted separately. This section lists those issues that we believe to be of importance in future planning.

OBSERVATIONS

Students talked in terms of like/dislike and were generally unable to define methods as effective/ineffective.

Students were more willing to state opinions and criticisms than we were led to believe by teachers and others.

Individual differences were evident in all focus groups but became more defined in upper level groups.

Almost no opinions were stated about English lessons received elsewhere or any comparisons to other education.

Students were generally unclear about how long it would take to learn English.

Groups were often dominated by 2-4 individuals with 1-3 others saying almost nothing.

It was easier for students to respond to very specific questions than to generate ideas in response to open-ended questions. This was less true, however, for the highest SPL groups.

Answers to "why are you learning" covered a wide range. Some students wanted to be able to talk to American friends, to learn to drive or shop or to keep up with their children as they learned English.

Finding employment was mentioned more frequently than other motivations but it was not necessarily the central reason for taking classes.

Some students noted that their goal was to attain a job that had future potential, so they were frustrated about the minimum training offered through ESL.

STUDENT COMMENTS AND PERCEPTIONS

Almost all agreed to the importance of practicing speaking English outside the class but almost no one spoke English at home or in any other setting in which they were not forced to use English.

Their common message was that they want to learn faster and want to pick up the pace of the classes. Their specific recommendations were:

Don't waste time on class schedule.
Start on time.
Do not tolerate late comers.
Minimize break times.

Maximize use of class time.
Don't address remedial problems at the expense of others.

Maintain efficient class size. Ranges were generally 8 to 12 students per teacher.

Students want more of everything; vocabulary. pronunciation, reading, writing, conversation.

Some were willing to sacrifice thoroughness and accuracy in order to go faster.

Others were interested in going carefully so they could get it right and remember it.

In general, students liked the periodical reorganizations of classes according to progress and level of ability, but did not like the lack of continuity of materials when they change teachers.

They would prefer to work through a book and finish it instead of skipping from chapter to chapter. They mentioned their frustration when they sometimes repeat chapters or skip sections when changing teachers.

They wanted to learn faster but also responded that they would be unable to study at home more, had few chances to practice and have little time to do more than they are doing now outside their family and work obligations.

III. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR PUBLIC POLICY DECISIONS

During the many site visits and interviews in this project it became evident that there were a number of undercurrents and recurring issues that affected the basic ability of agencies to deliver quality ESL services. This section is our attempt to identify these "critical issues". We wish to help people recognize the importance of these issues, stimulate the necessary discussion and make sure that clear policy and project design decisions are made which address each of these critical issues. In our opinion such decisions are essential in the efforts to improve the ESL programs in Minnesota

A. SUMMARY OF CRITICAL ISSUES

I. MANY AGENCIES HAVE BEEN REDUCED TO BELOW "CRITICAL MASS" SIZE

Many agencies have been reduced in size to a level that does not support the dynamics necessary for a healthy organization and makes it very difficult to support a professional staff.

- Training and development time is very minimal.
- Teachers and programs are isolated from each other.
- Many teachers consider ESL teaching as part-time work and must maintain other jobs while they teach.
- Salaries and benefits are not competitive with other professional educators.

Reduction in size of classes may be due to this 'critical mass' concept rather than a reduction in demand. People may not be coming because they are unaware of the class, or the size or quality of class has been reduced.

II. SOME COMMUNITIES HAVE ATTEMPTED TO FILL THE GAP

In some communities local resources have been rallied to provide basic English instruction to adult refugees.

- Often these are not money resources, but in-kind time, space, administration, or support services.
- These resources are not very secure. It seems as though they are offered as emergency stop-gap measures in which the arrangements could change overnight.

The availability of alternative resources differs significantly among communities and the ability of local staff to secure alternative resources varies among agencies.

- There are significant differences between urban, suburban and small town settings.
- Dedication/knowledge about local resettlement seems to prepare people better for this task.

Adult Basic and Continuing Education (ABCE) funds have been the most common resource for sustaining the waning ESL programs but the use of this resource varies significantly among agencies.

In some situations it is difficult if not impossible to differentiate between the ESL program and the ABCE program.

This transition has gone so far in some cases that ESL is considered just another source of money to support specialized activities within ABCE.

Some present policies have promoted this transition to ABCE.

All money is used for instructional time, little for administration, none for training, preparation.

The RFP and reporting process are viewed by many as cumbersome, especially for programs that receive smaller grants.

III. THE NEW EMPHASIS ON EMPLOYMENT IN ESL HAS NOT SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGED THE CONTEXTS OR METHODS USED IN ESL INSTRUCTION.

The employment emphasis is no great detriment to attempts to teach English literacy to refugees, but it also does not help much. There are more problems adapting in lower level classes.

Agencies and teachers generally do not view their efforts as part of the employment service continuum.

There is little or no use of employment as an outcome measure by teachers or agencies.

IV. TEACHING LITERACY IS CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL BY MOST TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS.

Most agencies have attempted to continue teaching literacy even though the federal directives for employment focus seem to make reading and writing secondary.

There is some dissatisfaction since the employment goals are short term where many of the goals for language and literacy training require long-term efforts.

There seems to be little state policy direction on how to balance this dilemma, so local agencies adjust any way they can.

Effectively teaching literacy requires special skill in the classroom, and past experience and training in teaching reading seems to be an advantage for teachers in ESL programs that emphasize literacy skills.

Most agencies and teachers consider their efforts as part of the local continuum of education services.

V. POLICY DIRECTION IS UNCLEAR ABOUT THE NEED FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS TO TEACH ESL CLASSES

There is a dilemma when deciding what skills are important for teaching ESL. It is rare to find individuals who are both knowledgable of the resettlement services for refugees and skilled in teaching English to adults. As a general rule, resettlement people have less skill and experience teaching, and experienced teachers know less about the resettlement efforts in the community.

Most teachers of ESL classes are quite isolated from those systems that could teach them teaching techniques and specific ESL methods.

Although the limited state and regional training seems good, it is not offered often enough.

The training that is offered assumes that all teachers have the basic skills and abilities about general teaching techniques. However, some teachers are in need of assistance in this area and many are interested in improving their skills.

Reduction in ESL monies has made it less likely to support professional educators as ESL teachers.

> Present working conditions are often part time with limited benefits, minimal preparation time and relative isolation from other teachers.

Individual methods of instruction have evolved to be quite different among classrooms and among agencies because of both the isolation of some programs and the emphasis on teacher autonomy in design and method selection.

VI. THE PRESENT DECENTRALIZED DELIVERY SYSTEM DOES CREATE SOME PROBLEMS

Although decentralization addresses a concern for refugee access, the trade-off may be reduced quality and an overall program that is not unified.

Having many small sites adds to the "critical mass" problem discussed above.

> One result is the mixing of student ability levels in one class which is very difficult for teachers to manage .

Scattered sites add to the wide variance in the kind and quality of services provided.

Providing leadership, support and training by the state is more difficult with a decentralized approach.

There were frequent comments on the need for more training.

Isolated teachers find it more difficult to share ideas and gain support from other teachers.

VII. MOST TEACHERS FEEL UNSUPPORTED AND ARE ISOLATED IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO DESIGN CURRICULA AND SELECT MATERIALS FOR THEIR CLASSES

Many teachers are totally responsible for the development of their curriculum.

Many receive little or no curriculum development assistance from their coordinators, especially in the smaller programs with one or two teachers and part-time coordinators.

Few programs allow teachers time to dedicate to curriculum development so much of it is done on personal time.

There is no capacity to share ideas and materials with teachers from other programs other than through occasional workshops and site visits.

VIII. TEACHERS HAVE VERY FEW OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE THEIR TEACHING SKILLS WHILE ON THE JOB.

The organized training options are only occasional. The workshop sessions that do exist spend little time on specific teaching skills.

Teachers are rarely observed and critiqued in their classes by either coordinators, fellow teachers or trainers.

This lack of training adds the the isolation of teachers and promotes the development of significant differences across classes.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ANALYSIS

1. Student Performance Measurements

This project has been a start at identifying methods that are most effective in teaching English. It is important to remember that these methods have been selected based on the perceptions of project coordinators, teachers and students interviewed throughout the project. Although it is constructive to learn the perceptions of the people who are closest to the classroom, it would be a worthwhile effort to begin collecting data that would allow measurement of the actual impact of given methods on students. If this is a direction desired for future data analysis, there are two elements which are necessary to develop.

1. An accurate measurement of student performance within each class that can be applied across all programs.

2. A data system that allows information on students to be collected and analyzed in order to judge which methods are more effective.

Progress is being made on both of these elements with the application of the BEST test and the developments on the Employment Competencies Checklist. Each has its potential but care should be taken in deciding which tool or combination of tools is most likely to work most effectively.

At the time of this study the BEST test had been introduced in the field only a few months earlier and the Checklist was just introduced. We have included some very subjective comments here on the BEST test and SPL Checklist to consider in future applications.

1. There was substantial variation among agencies in the amount of attention on the application of the BEST test.

2. There seems to be a need for training on the application of the test and on its use at the local level.

3. Most teachers and coordinators thought the BEST test Core Section rated individuals with oral skills too high. Also, without the literacy section there is not a complete profile of students' reading and writing skills.

4. Many use the BEST test for initial placement of students but also used interview or first-week teacher observations as the basis for final placement.

5. The one-on-one testing procedures are very time consuming and introduce significant variance of results due to individual testing practices.

6. Observations about the Checklist were limited because many had not received the materials during this project period, but most were enthusiastic about the concept and thought this structured teacher opinion format had potential to be useful.

2. Data System Recommendations

The second key element in actually measuring the effectiveness of teaching methods is the development and use of a data system that can keep track of student performance and can be used for analysis.

The present data system that is being developed does lend itself to use in comparing student performance once the data is collected for at least a year. There are, however, a number of considerations we recommend as this system continues development.

1. The data system should develop a means of clustering students by performance level as recommended in this study, or by future clusters as they are refined.

2. Student performance levels should be displayed statistically to represent the variance within agencies or within clusters.

3. Summary reports should be regularly and quickly supplied to the local agencies, and access to the data system should be available to local agencies for planning purposes.

4. Turn around time for data should be reduced.

It appears that such a data system could be used to track actual student performance and could be applied to the methods identified here to actually measure which methods are most effective in teaching English to adult refugees.

APPENDIX A.

SUMMARY OF THE AGENCIES

Included here is a listing of the agencies under contract to deliver ESL services and a summary of their goals for the year as defined in their contracts. The summary is intended to give the reader a sense of the diversity of these agencies and to assist program people in discovering who else is working under similar circumstances.

Please note that after two quarters of operation many of these agencies have experienced a mix of students quite different from what they predicted in their contracts, so use these data only as a general guideline in describing either the size, scope or diversity of the students population.

ESL EVALUATION PROJECT
Nelson and Bringewatt

SUMMARY OF CONTRACT GOALS

	STUDENTS		PRIORITY GROUPS			....PERFORMANCE LEVELS..						TCHRS
AGENCIES	TOTAL	%	PG1	PG2	PG3	L 1	L 2	L 3	L 4	L 5	L 6	#
ANOKA-HENNEPIN	30	2%	22	8	0	2	6	6	7	4	5	3
			73%	27%	0%	7%	20%	20%	23%	13%	17%	
ASSOC...HMONG WOMEN *	165	9%	0	0	165	100	65	0	0	0	0	2
			0%	0%	100%	61%	39%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
AUSTIN	60	3%	60	0	0	2	10	29	7	8	4	2
			100%	0%	0%	3%	17%	48%	12%	13%	7%	
BURNESVILLE	20	1%	6	14	0	0	0	3	10	4	3	
			30%	70%	0%	0%	0%	15%	50%	20%	15%	
MN. CAMB. BUDDHIST SOC. *	60	3%	4	32	24	60	0	0	0	0	0	
			7%	53%	40%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
DULUTH	50	3%	35	15	0	15	20	9	11	2	5	1
			70%	30%	0%	30%	40%	18%	22%	4%	10%	
FARIBAULT	25	1%	18	7	0	10	10	3	2			1
			72%	28%	0%	40%	40%	12%	8%	0%	0%	
INT'L INSTITUTE	110	6%	33	39	48	0	24	51	36	9	0	8
			30%	35%	44%	0%	22%	46%	33%	8%	0%	
LAO FAMILY (BILING. MAA)*	60	3%	5	5	50	40	20	0	0	0	0	1
			8%	8%	83%	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
LAO FAMILY (EMPLOYMENT)*	120	6%	0	20	100	60	60	0	0	0	0	
			0%	17%	83%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
MINN. LITERACY COUNCIL **												

METRO DEAF SENIORS	32	2%	0	0	32	16	16	0	0	0	0	1
			0%	0%	100%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
MOORHEAD	60	3%	22	36	2	15	9	12	10	10	4	
			37%	60%	3%	25%	15%	20%	17%	17%	7%	
MPLS	559	29%	355	149	55	115	138	84	86	86	50	7
			64%	27%	10%	21%	25%	15%	15%	15%	9%	
ROBBINSDALE	55	3%	30	19	6	0	4	19	22	8	2	1
			55%	35%	11%	0%	7%	35%	40%	15%	4%	
ROCHESTER	265	14%	240	15	0	50	50	45	40	40	30	6
			91%	6%	0%	19%	19%	17%	15%	15%	11%	
ST. CLOUD	33	2%	2	24	7	2	24	7	0	0	0	2
			6%	73%	21%	6%	73%	21%	0%	0%	0%	
ST. PAUL	192	10%	192	0	0	24	48	52	40	24	4	8
			100%	0%	0%	13%	25%	27%	21%	13%	2%	
WESTONKA	40	2%	6	27	7	0	10	23	7	0	0	2
			15%	68%	18%	0%	25%	58%	18%	0%	0%	
TOTALS.....	1936	100%	...1030	410	496	...511	514	343	278	195	107	45
			53%	21%	26%	26%	27%	18%	14%	10%	6%	

* MAA Priority Groups are reorganized to match ESL PG's

** MLC does not provide direct service. They train and coordinate volunteers.

APPENDIX B.

OUTLINES FOR AGENCY SITE INTERVIEWS

The interviews during this project were not formally structured with predetermined and prewritten questions. They were guided conversations designed to elicit peoples' perceptions about the effectiveness of methods and contexts for teaching English as a second language.

These conversational interviews were guided with the aid of a working outline on order to assure that all relevent topics were covered during each interview. Those working outlines are included in this appendix so that those who are interested can review them.

1. INTERVIEW WITH PROJECT DIRECTOR

With the person directly responsible for the administration and management of the ESL project. May in some cases be the lead teacher when the Director does not have day-to-day contact with the program.

Estimated time for the interview 45 minutes

1. (Introductions and quick explanation of the project and of the purpose for this site visit.)

2. Quick review and confirmation of the description of the program setting as described in the agency file materials, including:

   reason for starting ESL classes locally
   years of operation
   size of program (students, staff, budget)
   relationship with parent organization, if any
   description of local refugee community
   refugee community served
   geographic setting
   experience of teachers
   experience of agency with refugees and with education activities

3. Discussion of the present decision-making process for designing and administering ESL classes, including:

   original purposes for starting classes
   philosophy behind the present design of the class
   role of administrator in supervising teachers
   process used to decide major context and method issues

4. Discussion of program design and evaluation efforts within the agency, including:

   monitoring of classroom effectiveness, including teachers, contexts, methods.

   process used to incorporate experiences in the classroom into revisions for future program improvements

5. Discussion of the role of the State in monitoring and in providing support, including:

   perception of quality and direction of State efforts
   time needed for monitoring efforts
   the returns to the local agency for these monitoring and evaluation efforts

6. Discussion of present outcome measurements

   direction of new performance measures
   direction of the new data system

7. Relationship with other local service agencies, including

   recruitment of students
   other educators to advise on class design
   agencies providing other services that refugee students may need
   other educational opportunities for students during or after ESL
   employment referral agencies

2. INTERVIEW WITH TEACHERS

With 1 or 2 teachers in the small agencies, and 3 or 4 teachers in the large agencies.

Estimated time for the interview, 90 minutes

1. Description of present program, including:

    classroom size
    student/teacher ratio
    physical setting
    class schedule
    students being taught (ethnicity, age, level)

2. Discussion of how methods/materials were chosen and why

3. Discussion of which students are most successful and why

4. Discussion of which methods work best for which students

5. Discussion of the employment emphasis of ESL classes

6. Discussion of relationship between administration and teachers

    decision-making and problem-solving processes
    level of support from the top
    staff development

7. Discussion of present student performance measures

    BEST test
    SPL system
    ideas for better measurements

3. STUDENT FOCUS GROUP OUTLINE

1. Introduce selves and explain reason for meeting.

2. Introduce students

   Where from?
   How long in the U.S.?
   Whether they have family, and if so, who speaks English?
   Whether they are or have been employed in the U.S.?
   Whether they have taken ESL classes in camp or in the U.S.?

3. Now we would like to talk about what helps you learn English. Think about this class and about other classes you have been in.

   Probes: (To be used to stimulate conversation and to elicit response when students do not react well to the open-ended question on their own.)

read	write sentences
listen and repeat	copy sentences
talk to each other	memorize
conversations	
use workbooks	role play
use dictionary	spelling
have homework	play games
practice speaking outside	have tutors

4. What would be the best way to set up classes for refugees? Is it important to;

   Probes: (To be used to stimulate conversation and to elicit response when students do not react well t othe open-ended question on their own.)

   Meet every day
   Have day care
   Have someone in school who can translate
   Have someone to help with job search
   Classes close to home
   Day or night classes
   Speakers on American life
   Assistance with resettlement problems

5. What are the best things about your class?

6. If you could change some things about your class, what would you change?

APPENDIX C.

EVALUATORS' BIOGRAPHIES

DAVID NELSON
4334 Grand Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55409
(612) 822-7579

David Nelson has been providing consulting and technical assistance on human service issues in the Twin Cities for the last ten years. Some examples of his past responsibilities include Director of Special Projects and Acting Executive Director of Enablers, a nonprofit agency that provided technical assistance, consulting service and public policy research for youth-related human services. In that capacity Mr. Nelson worked with dozens of agencies, providing them management, training or consulting services.

Since 1980 Mr. Nelson has worked as an independent consultant, and has specialized on program design, evaluation and public policy research projects within the human service sector.

The most recent responsibilities that relate directly to this project include the development of Refugees in Ramsey County, a 1984 report for The St. Paul Foundation. Mr. Nelson was one of the four-person team members responsible for the research and analysis. In addition, Mr. Nelson also prepared the 1985 research to The St. Paul Foundation, Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations in Minnesota. These efforts have provided Mr. Nelson with a solid understanding of the refugee community and the issues that they face.

Mr. Nelson's project evaluation experience has included both formative and summative projects, ranging from an evaluative review of all legal services for a local foundation, to evaluation of specific projects to assist in funding decisions. Most recent is a 9-month project with the Council on Quality Education to evaluate their Innovative/Cost Effective projects.

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Marg Bringewatt has worked for ten years in human service agencies. Direct service experience includes refugee resettlement, family and crisis intervention, emergency shelter, youth counseling, child care, neighborhood organizing, and community education. In addition Ms. Bringewatt worked for three years at the St. Paul Foundation where she reviewed over 600 proposals from local nonprofits, provided technical assistance to numerous agencies, and managed a variety of research projects.

Her experience with refugees began in 1979 when she worked closely with refuge leaders and others to establish a crime prevention program in St. Paul Public Housing. At the St. Paul Foundation, Ms. Bringewatt has worked closely with several MAA's, wrote and published the monthly Refugee Newsletter which was a circulation of 1000, and has been a frequent public speaker on refugee issues. Two major projects included the production of the studies Refugees in Ramsey County, and Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations in Minnesota, completed in 1984 and 1985. She is also a member of the Governor's State Refugee Advisory Council and works with the education subcommittee.

In 1982 Ms. Bringewatt earned a Masters Degree in Public Affairs from the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, where she specialized in administration and community and economic development. Other public affairs activities have included organizing roundtable conferences with local foundations, volunteer work for the Minnesota Project and membership in the Citizens' League.

Ms. Bringewatt has worked with evaluation in a variety of settings. She designed a post-treatment evaluation system for a local nonprofit with the assistance of the Office of Research and Statistics at the Wilder Foundation. She has also assisted numerous grantees while at The St. Paul Foundation in creating evaluation systems that go beyond data collection to thoughtful analysis of outcomes. In addition she created a three-year program which will grant funds to nonprofits to conduct evaluation or research in the areas of intrafamilial sex abuse. Ms. Bringewatt also designed the internal evaluation to be used for this project.